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**Cultural Programmes for Sporting Mega Events: London 2012 – A  
Case Study  
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CONTEMPORARY CASES ONLINE

# **Cultural Programmes for Sporting Mega-Events**

**London 2012 – A Case Study**

**Nancy Stevenson**

**Contemporary Cases Online**

**Series Editors: Alan Fyall and Brian Garrod**

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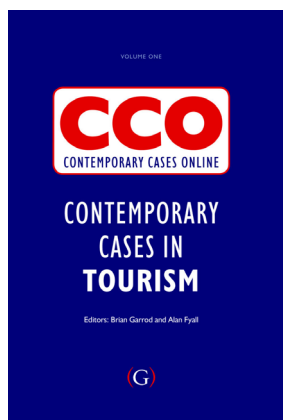
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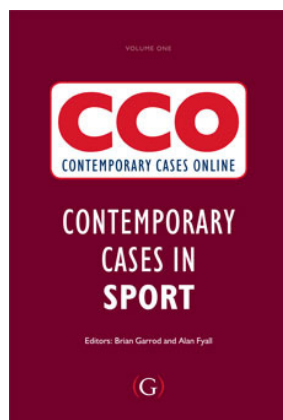
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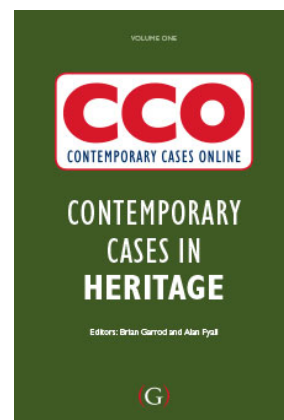
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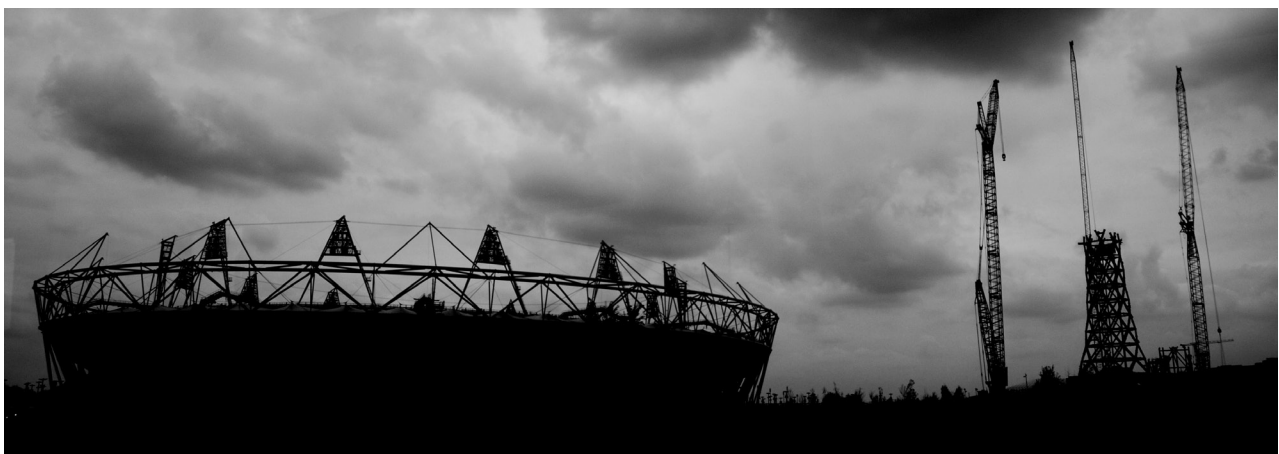


“The 2012 London Games are not just about sport – they are an opportunity to enjoy and participate in a major cultural celebration” (DCMS, 2010: 13).

## Introduction: Sporting mega-events and culture

Sporting mega-events often have a cultural element. However the relationship between culture and sport is complex and there is not a standardised approach across different events. Sometimes cultural programmes are explicitly required. This is the case for candidate cities when bidding to stage the Olympic Games, where Cultural Olympiads are now a compulsory element of the bid. Whether a formal requirement or not, cities or nations that bid for sporting mega-events often choose to develop cultural programmes alongside the sporting event. Cultural programmes and activities are seen as ways of engaging more people and broadening the overall appeal of the event (see Box 1). Cultural programmes can also play a role in securing positive legacies from the event. They can do this by developing and showcasing the cultural assets of the event’s location to enhance its image and attract visitors and investors after the event.

This case study focuses on three regional programmes associated with the [Cultural Olympiad](#) for the London 2012 Olympic Games (hereafter called the 2012 Games). In so doing, it sets out to explore the ideas underpinning the projects in each region. The term ‘[legacy](#)’ is used to explain the long-term benefits expected to be created by the programmes and which are in addition to the physical legacies of the 2012 Games such as the Olympic Stadium (see Figure 1). The website material for the case study was taken from the [Legacy Trust](#) website in January 2012. This material is included to encourage discussion about the themes and issues that arise when places develop a cultural element aligned to the staging of a sporting mega-event. Web links are provided and readers are encouraged to visit these sites in order to investigate the stories that emerge not that these projects have been delivered and their legacies begin to be formally evaluated.



**Figure 1:** The Olympic Stadium, London, Reproduced courtesy of Charlie Inskip

## What is culture?

Cultural programmes are underpinned by a range of conceptualisations, some closely tied in with the arts, creativity and the cultural industries, and others more closely linked to ideas about culture in terms of people's lives and community identity (see Figure 2). Three dominant conceptualisations that appear to underpin the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 Games are as follows:

- ◆ **Social conceptualisation.** This identifies culture in terms of community, multi-cultural expression, shared experiences, local representation and empowerment. This conceptualisation is framed within a wider social agenda and links culture to social development.
- ◆ **Arts conceptualisation.** Identifies culture in terms of artistic expression, accomplishments and endeavour. It includes performance, opera and theatre, music, film, visual arts and dance. This conceptualisation is often associated with notions of high and low culture.
- ◆ **The economic/regeneration conceptualisation.** Cultural activity is used as a mechanism to enhance or change the image of cities or places within cities. Culture is used as a catalyst for change, encouraging business to invest in the area and attracting visitors (Stevenson, 2012).

In 2008, the definition of culture associated with the Cultural Olympiad was:

“Culture covers not only pursuits such as visiting galleries, museums and theatres but also activities as diverse as carnival and street theatre, fashion, gaming, photography, heritage and the natural environment, and many more. With this in mind, our definition of ‘culture’ in the context of the London 2012 Games is broad and inclusive” (DCMS, 2008: 45).



**Figure 2:** Hackney Carnival 2008. Reproduced courtesy of permission of Charlie Inskip

### Box 1: Excerpts from DCMS (2010)

"The Games also offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase the best of the UK's culture, creativity, industry and innovation. As well as the estimated potential global audience of 4 billion people, we expect to welcome to London 120 Heads of State, as well as 14,700 participants, 320,000 extra visitors and 20,000 accredited journalists. If we make the most of this defining moment we will boost national self-confidence, enhance the UK's reputation abroad and fully exploit the opportunities for growth offered by hosting the Games" (DCMS, 2010: 7).

"More generally the Cultural Olympiad is already engaging millions of people in the excitement of the Games through the cultural life of the nation. More exciting projects to come will engage and inspire the next generation of performers and audiences. Plans have been announced for leading artists from around the world to come together in the UK to deliver commissions and special projects as part of the London 2012 Festival. This will be a chance for everyone to celebrate London 2012 through dance, music, theatre, the visual arts, film and digital innovation, and leave a lasting legacy for culture and the arts in the UK. Over 1,000 events will be featured on a special website which will go live from Summer 2011. The aim is for over three million people to attend and be part of the London 2012 Festival" (DCMS, 2010: 10).

## The relationship between sport and culture

The Cultural Olympiad attempts to make links between culture and sport. However linking these two elements is fraught with difficulties. Some researchers claim that the values associated with sport and culture are incompatible in modern society, with culture being the "poor relation to a globalised, mediated, profit orientated sports industry" (Inglis, 2008: 471). In this context, it is difficult to develop shared understanding across different programmes. There are huge disparities in the funding arrangements for cultural and sporting elements, with monies predominantly focused on developing infrastructure and staging the sporting events in 2012. While cultural funding is normally assigned at the outset of the project, cultural elements tend to be less physically tangible and less visible. These 'soft' elements are often seen as the easiest to cut if (and when) the Games run over budget. Sometimes budgets are cut directly, but in the case of the 2012 Games some cuts were indirect and occurred when National Lottery and Arts Council funds were redirected towards the physical infrastructure for the Games. This means the Cultural Olympiad was developed in the context of a decrease in mainstream arts funding.

The marginality of the cultural programme appears to be exacerbated by the lack of clear guidelines from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) about the nature and evaluation of cultural programmes. This has led to fragmented programmes, with minimal public and media attention. The four-year timeframe intensifies this problem, as the Cultural Olympiad evolves and objectives and priorities change over time. The evolving nature of the programme makes it difficult to identify its dimensions clearly and evaluate the outcomes of the Cultural Olympiad (Garcia, 2004).



## The Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 Games

The [Olympic Charter](#) outlines the fundamental principles of ‘Olympism’, which are framed to include notions of social responsibility, ethics, human dignity and peace. This is presented as a holistic philosophy, “[b]lending sport with culture and education” (IOC, 2011: 10). Countries that bid to host the Olympics must include a cultural programme known as a Cultural Olympiad, commonly a four-year programme of events which supports the delivery of legacies from the Games. In this case study, three phases of the Cultural Olympiad are identified. The first is the original programme outlined in the bid documentation in 2004. The second reflects developments prior to the launch of the Cultural Olympiad in August 2008 and in its first year of operation. The third outlines the programme that has been developed since early 2010 and is to be delivered in 2012.

### The bid

When countries bid to host the Olympic Games they prepare a Candidate File defining their proposal. [London’s Candidate File](#) for the 2012 Games was submitted in 2004 and described the broad approach to developing the Games and its legacies. It also outlined detailed proposals which were themed to include sport and venues, the Olympic Village, and transport. Theme 17 considered “[Olympism and Culture](#)” and identified a cultural and educational programme to link communities. London was characterised as a port city with a history of welcoming “people, ideas, information and goods from around the world”. (London 2012, 2004: 173). The programme was framed around ideas of diversity, creativity, community and youth culture and was envisaged as a celebration of ‘the renaissance of East London’. A central project was the Olympic Friendship, a boat crewed by “young people, artists, philosophers and students” travelling around the world encouraging creative dialogue and exchange (London 2012, 2004). This project also envisaged a virtual boat whose voyage would underpin a national educational programme.

When London won the bid in 2005, the major focus was on developing organisational arrangements, processes and plans to deliver the infrastructure associated with the 2012 Games. Media interest was largely focused on the development of the Olympic Park, concerns about a spiralling budget and staging the Games. Other aspects such as the Cultural Olympiad received much less attention. [The House of Commons \(HOC\) Culture, Media and Sport Committee](#) recognised this issue and recommended “that the Government should do more to publicise and co-ordinate it, drawing together ideas, sharing good practice, and increasing awareness of some of the more practical and imaginative suggestions which are being made” (HOC, 2000: 46).

### The launch of the Cultural Olympiad and early years

The Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 Games was launched in September 2008. It claimed to be “for everyone” (LOCOG, 2008: 2), a celebration of the internationalism and cultural diversity of London and the UK, inspiring and involving young people, and generating a positive legacy. Its objectives were to:

- ◆ “inspire and involve the widest range of London and UK wide communities;

- ◆ generate sustainable long-term benefits to our cultural life;
- ◆ create outstanding moments of creative excellence across the full range of performing arts and creative industries;
- ◆ connect future generations with the UK's artistic communities and with their peers around the world;
- ◆ promote contemporary London as a major world cultural capital;
- ◆ drive tourism and inward investment and use the creative industries to boost economic regeneration;
- ◆ embrace the Olympic movement values of excellence, respect and friendship and the Paralympic movement vision to empower, achieve, inspire" ([LOCOG](#), 2007: 4).

The Cultural Olympiad encompassed three main elements: the Olympic ceremonies, bid projects and a UK-wide cultural festival. It aimed to translate the IOC's cultural agenda into a range of programmes reflecting the broad objectives outlined above. Some were intended to engage and involve communities. These programmes tended to be inward facing, located within communities and focused on the needs and aspirations of those communities. Other programmes presented artistic and cultural displays. They were primarily outward-facing, aiming to appeal to and attract wider audiences.

At the outset it was envisaged that the UK-wide cultural festival would have a strong local aspect, engaging local communities and drawing from 'grassroots' community projects. The 'Inspire Programme' was set up to provide an opportunity for non-commercial organisations to bid to associate themselves with the Olympics. '[Inspire Marks](#)' were awarded to over 2,000 projects by January 2012, allowing these non-commercial projects to link to the 2012 brand. The advantages of this were not financial but provided the potential for projects to receive wider recognition and access to broader networks (London 2012, 2012).

At the start of this phase, 10 major projects were identified. These were:

- 1 Artists Taking the Lead** – encompassing 12 art commissions to celebrate local and national cultural life.
- 2 Young Futures Festival** – aiming to provide creative opportunities for young people.
- 3 Sounds!** - music projects enabling young people to work with musicians.
- 4 Stories of the World** – interpreting museum collections to inspire people to explore culture and heritage.
- 5 Film and Video Nation** - involving young people in film, video and digital technology through competitions and festivals.
- 6 Shakespeare Now** – widening the audience for Shakespeare's work.
- 7 Extraordinary Ability** - showcasing disability arts and sport.
- 8 World Cultural Festival** - celebrating international culture.
- 9 Festival of Carnivals** - engaging people in street festivals and performances.
- 10 Access All Areas** - widening audiences of heritage sites (DCMS, 2008).



There is consistency between the objectives set out in the bid documentation and the programme launched in 2008. However some detailed projects were not developed. For example, while many projects reflect a commitment to developing friendship, the ‘Friend-ship’ boat was not launched. The decision to abandon this project arose due to concerns about funding and the complexities of its enactment. The decision to scrap the ‘Friend-ship’ was identified as a significant broken promise (BBC, 2008).

## Shaping up for the Games

The early phases of the Cultural Olympiad did not capture media and popular attention (see Box 2), and were criticised for being “ill-defined and uninspired” (Horne and Whannel, 2012: 147). In its last two years, the Cultural Olympiad evolved rapidly, spurred on by the realisation that it had to be more widely understood in order to create positive legacy outcomes. There were changes in political and operational leadership. Other changes arose in the context of economic recession and fiscal restraint in the public sector. Most major projects evolved from those envisaged in 2008 and some project titles were deleted. These included the Young Futures Festival, Shakespeare Now, The World Cultural Festival and the Festival of Carnivals. This reflected the decision to define the programme more clearly and to increase its impact. Many projects that might have originally fallen under these headings (such as the One Hackney Festival and the World Shakespeare Festival) went ahead and formed part of the London 2012 Festival.

The [London 2012 Festival](#) ran during the 12 weeks before and during the Olympics and Paralympics. This festival was the culmination of the Cultural Olympiad and drew together the endeavours of the major projects outlined below encompassing and cultural events including dance, music, theatre, the visual arts and film.

The six major projects were:

- 1 Artists Taking the Lead** – This project was led by the Arts Council and involved 12 public art commissions across the UK. One example, ‘Godiva Awakes’ was commissioned in the West Midlands and created of a large carnival puppet. There were a series of festival events to awaken the puppet in Coventry, to mark her journey and to celebrate her arrival in London. These formed part of the London 2012 Festival (Arts Council 2012a).
- 2 Stories of the World** – This included a wide range of projects, developed and delivered at a regional and local level to showcase museum, library and archive collections and develop wider audiences. An example of this was ‘CultuRISE’, a regional project which ran in the North East, and projects with young people to make museums more exciting.
- 3 Unlimited** – Funding was provided to support and celebrate arts, culture and sport by disabled and deaf people enabling them to create and showcase their work. Projects were developed and staged around the country and many were brought together in a festival at the Southbank Centre which coincided with the Paralympics (Arts Council, 2012b).
- 4 Film Nation** – A competition for young people aged between 14 and 25, who were invited to develop three-minute films inspired by Olympic and Paralympic Values.

An awards ceremony was held on the 4 July 2012 to celebrate the competitors' achievements.

- 5 **Discovering Places** – Launched in July 2010, this encompassed projects and events to encourage people to explore their local built and natural environment. Many were included in the London 2012 Festival.
- 6 **Music** (DCMS, 2012) – A range of music events were developed under this heading and included Music Nation in March 2012 and the River of Music in July 2012. The latter comprised a multi-venue weekend festival which brought together music from around the world.

### **Box 2: Excerpt from the Guardian – Interview with Ruth Mackenzie: 'There's no time to mess around'**

"For the purposes of the Cultural Olympiad, Mackenzie is the cavalry, brought in after an almost two-year interregnum (her predecessor in the job, Keith Khan, resigned in March 2008). This time last year, things looked bad for the Cultural Olympiad. It was a joke within the arts world, and beyond that no one had really heard of it. "What is the Cultural Olympiad?" people kept asking. The process appeared directionless; the programme, such as it was, expressed in such indecipherable jargon as to render it meaningless. The London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) looked like just the wrong outfit to be running an artistic programme, their energies, understandably, focused on producing two vast sporting events. And yet the Cultural Olympiad has the potential to be more than a glossy adjunct. Done well, it could harness the enthusiasm of millions of sports fans, here and abroad, for something that Britain is indubitably good at: art" (Higgins, 2010).

## **Culture and the legacies of sporting mega-events**

Sporting mega-events can play a role in achieving wider objectives relating to the development and/or regeneration of places. Host countries often engage in projects and programmes in an attempt to capture legacies from events. Legacies are defined as those outcomes that arise from and outlast an event, and can be positive or negative. Positive legacies do not automatically occur after events and legacy planning is required before, during, and after the event in order to secure positive long-term effects (Smith, Stevenson and Edmundson, 2011; Miah and Garcia, 2012).

### **The legacy plans**

Legacy planning is an essential element of an Olympic Games bid. In the pre-games phase, legacy aspirations were predominantly framed in terms of the population around the Olympic Park. Cultural legacies for the community were identified arising from cultural opportunities and training associated with the wider regeneration programme. The Candidate File for the London 2012 Games identified four legacy aspirations:

- ◆ **A legacy for sport** – After the Games, the sports infrastructure (such as the main stadium and the aquatics centre) would be converted to provide a range of national and local facilities. Wide-ranging sport programmes were also envisaged to encourage greater participation.

- ◆ **A legacy for the community** – Community legacies were framed predominantly in terms of those communities living near the Olympic Park. They included “significant improvements in health and well-being, education, skills and training, job opportunities, cultural entitlements, housing and social integration and the environment” for people “in London’s poorest and most disadvantaged area”.
- ◆ **A legacy for the environment** – This envisaged the “Low Carbon Games” with all spectators travelling by public transport and new standards for “sustainable production, consumption and recycling of natural resources”.
- ◆ **A legacy for the economy** – This was framed in terms of those communities living near the Olympic Park and included “the creation of wider employment opportunities and improvements in the education, skills and knowledge of the local labour force in an area of very high unemployment” (London 2012, 2004: .23-25).



**Figure 3:** Artwork at the Viewtube 2010. Photo Credit: Nancy Stevenson

In 2008, the Department of Culture Media and Sport published *Before, during and after: Making the most of the London 2012 Games*. This document identified five broad legacy promises for the 2012 Games:

- 1 To make the UK a world-leading sporting nation
- 2 To transform the heart of East London
- 3 To inspire a generation of young people
- 4 To make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living
- 5 To demonstrate the UK is a creative, inclusive and welcoming place to live in, visit and for business (DCMS, 2008: 3).

This document identified the Cultural Olympiad as a key programme to deliver Promise 3, aiming to increase engagement in cultural activities. It was also identified as one of the programmes that would help to deliver Promise 5. It provided a platform to celebrate national identity and creativity and to use this to create an image of the UK as a welcoming place.

This document outlined specific aims for the Cultural Olympiad to “celebrate the diversity of London and welcome the world to the UK; inspire and engage young people; and leave a lasting legacy” (DCMS, 2008: 45). The following cultural legacies were identified:

- ◆ “UK-wide artistic and cultural events of the very highest quality, to inspire a new generation of audiences and participants;
- ◆ Many more opportunities for young people to engage in cultural activities;
- ◆ Opportunities for talented young people from all communities and backgrounds to fulfil their creative potential;
- ◆ A global showcase of our cultural excellence and diversity” (DCMS, 2008: 45).

After national elections in 2010, a new coalition government was formed. This did not lead to any major shifts in legacy aspirations for the Games but they were reframed around four legacy themes with an increased focus on economic aspirations for the games. Ambitions to encourage people to adopt more sustainable practices and make progress towards achieving equality for disabled people have been identified and run across the following four themes:

- ◆ **“Sport:** harnessing the UK’s passion for sport to increase grass roots participation and competitive sport and to encourage physical activity;
- ◆ **Economic:** exploiting the opportunities for economic growth offered by hosting the Games;
- ◆ **Community engagement:** promoting community engagement and achieving participation across all groups in society through the Games;
- ◆ **East London regeneration:** ensuring that the Olympic Park can be developed after the Games as one of the principal drivers of regeneration in East London.” ([DCMS, 2011a: 1](#))

The projects associated with the Cultural Olympiad are diverse and span the themes identified above. Some projects offer opportunities for economic growth by developing and supporting cultural events and attracting people to visit those events, some are focused on trying to engage young people in cultural activity, and some are focused on developing cultural aspects of the regeneration of East London. The outcomes of different cultural projects vary and reflect a different mix of the themes. For example, in section 7, the Urban Games (see Box 3) encompass both sporting and community engagement elements. Theatre and music events within the London 2012 Festival and regional events like Lakes Alive (see Box 4) reflect the economic theme, attracting audiences to diverse events around the UK. The events identified in the Accentuate Project (see Box 5) are focused on a range of projects reflecting the community engagement theme and specifically aiming to provide opportunities for people with disabilities.

This study has shown that the Cultural Olympiad evolved since its inception. As it evolved, the cultural aspirations and envisaged cultural legacies also evolved. The nature and extent of any cultural legacies will be affected by a broad range of contextual factors. Since the bid was made there have been an economic downturn, a change in government, fiscal restraint and



the emergence of new policy initiatives and governance arrangements. All these changes mean that the debates and definitions of the cultural legacies arising from the Games will continue to evolve as they are re-articulated and re-evaluated in a changing world.

## Measuring the effects of the Cultural Olympiad

After the Games, there is to be a ‘meta-evaluation’ of the impacts and legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, coordinated through the DCMS. The overall legacy of the Games will be evaluated by pulling together the results of evaluations of individual legacy programmes, and conducting some additional research (DCMS, 2011a, b). The meta-evaluation will be structured around a range of indicators relating to the four legacy themes.

The legacy themes and indicators are outlined in Table 1:

**Table 1:** Summary of most important indicators by theme

Sport	Economic	Social	East London
Participation in competitive school sport	Gross Value Added (GVA)	Cohesion	Land and property values
Participation in sport and physical activity by adults and young people	Employment	Participation in volunteering	Regional GVA
Sustainable sports infrastructure	Inward investment into the UK	Participation in culture	Resident satisfaction
Medals won in major championships	Exports from the UK	Subjective well-being	Economic structure/profile
Subjective well-being	Tourism visitor numbers and spend per visitor	Attitudes towards disability	Unemployment
	Accessible transport infrastructure	Sustainable lifestyles	Socio-economic convergence
	Sustainable approaches to construction and event management		

Source: DCMS (2011b)

The indicators in the table show that some of the Games’ legacies can be clearly defined and are relatively straightforward to measure. Examples include sport participation rates, medals won in major championships, exports from the UK, tourism visitor numbers and unemployment. However, it is hard to see from this table where and how the Cultural Olympiad might be evaluated. The previous sections have identified that the Cultural Olympiad is broadly framed and comprises a multitude of national, regional and local projects around the country which run across the four themes. In this context, the evaluation of the legacies of the Cultural Olympiad will be challenging because of the range and volume of activities and the interdependencies between them. It will be difficult to measure some qualitative outcomes, such as the extent to which young people are ‘inspired’ and the implications of that inspiration. It will also be hard to isolate project outcomes from other contextual factors. For example, a project may provide arts training for young people but this is within a wider context of economic recession and cuts to mainstream arts funding, which means there are fewer employment opportunities. The following difficulties associated with measuring the Cultural Olympiad are recognised:

“... the Cultural Olympiad is made up of component projects whose focus could conceivably be any one of the other legacy themes, this will mean projects may be cultural in nature but are likely to have impacts on opportunities for disabled people, tourism, the economy and volunteering” (DCMS, 2011b: 10).

There will be a number of evaluation exercises to evaluate the impact of the Cultural Olympiad. Some will occur as part of the meta-evaluation but it is also likely that individual organisations will also be evaluating specific projects.

An additional complexity arises when trying to evaluate cultural projects that have a mixture of social and economic aspirations. These aspirations are not necessarily mutually compatible and sometimes demonstrate contradictory tensions. For example, a project to stage a music festival might be simultaneously directed at attracting external visitors and media attention, while also trying to achieve local representation and empowerment of disadvantaged groups. An approach that is too focused on delivering the former might exclude local communities; while an approach focusing on the latter might create something that does not appeal to a wider audience. Evaluation of the 2012 Games needs to take account of complex and sometimes contradictory objectives. The aspect of an event that is considered the most important is not necessarily the aspect that is most easily measured. For example, it might be relatively easy to identify the number of people who attended an event but this will not always be a good indicator that the event was successful. An event which is aiming to improve community involvement and a sense of inclusion may fail in some senses if it attracts too many people from outside the local area.

## Exploring three regional programmes

This section outlines regional programmes in three regions of the UK. These programmes were developed to deliver the legacy objectives outlined above and provided a way to roll out the UK Wide festival. They were supported by the Legacy Trust, which had a fund of £40 million for arts, sports and education projects to celebrate and create legacies from the 2012 Games. Across the UK there were 12 regional programmes which shared three key aims:

- ◆ “to unite culture, sport and education, in line with the values and vision of the Olympic and Paralympic Games;
- ◆ to make a lasting difference to all those involved;
- ◆ to be grassroots projects, often small in scale, and unite communities of interest at local and regional level” (Legacy Trust, 2012a).

What was envisioned, at the start of 2012, for three of the regionally-funded cultural programmes is outlined below.



### Box 3: North East – NE-Generation

NE-Generation was a programme consisting of diverse projects with the following aims:

- ◆ To bring about a shift in the way in which children and young people and the North East's cultural sector collaborate;
- ◆ To develop a more relevant, children and young people focused cultural sector where young people experience, participate in and generate cultural activity on their own terms;
- ◆ To assist the cultural sector in becoming more responsive to and reflective of young people and their cultural needs and interests;
- ◆ To assist the cultural sector in playing a greater part in children and young people's lives, and increasing children and young people's self-awareness, creative opportunities for self-expression and enabling them to develop their own ideas of personal and regional identity;
- ◆ To incorporate the "widest possible definition of culture" (Legacy Trust UK, 2008: n.p.)

The projects were:

1. **Culturise:** This project was led by young people and aimed to create cultural resources and engage people with the existing resources in the region.
2. **Dale Force!** Aimed to improve cultural opportunities for young people in rural areas.
3. **Five Ring Circus:** Promoted youth circus across the North East
4. **Future Cinema:** Enabled young people to learn about film, animation and digital technologies.
5. **Tech Max:** Aimed to engage 'looked after' young people in cultural activities.
6. **Time Travel:** aimed to make local history interesting and accessible for young people.
7. **Urban Alchemy:** used art forms such as drama, break dancing and graffiti to celebrate young people and their cultures, imagination and aspirations.
8. **Urban Games:** comprised annual events which included breakdancing, DJing, skateboarding, BMXing and Parkour. This project is outlined in more depth below.
9. **Urban Music Training:** provided training for young DJs, producers, vocalists, rappers and instrumentalists.

There are also two overarching projects: 10th Project and Cultural Innovation Fund which provided networks and skill training for young people involved in the project and allowed them to allocate £100,000 of funding for emerging artists from the North East to work with young people.

**Urban Games** was a three-year project celebrating culture, creative and sporting activities. It created an annual event for young people that encompassed urban arts and sports inspired by Hip Hop culture and some extreme sports.

"Conceived by young people on Tyneside as an alternative to the traditional sports of the Olympics, the Urban Games is for those who are more passionate about Hip Hop and urban sports and arts ... The inaugural event in 2010 took place at The Sage Gateshead. For many of the young people involved in the Urban Games it was the first time they had attended an event like this, let alone run it. The Urban Games 2011 built on the experience of the previous year, developing the young people's skills and increasing the scale of the event. Taking place at the Whitley Bay links, the Urban Games attracted 8000 spectators, 400+ audience at the showcase, 100+ volunteers, 300+ competitors and performers, 20+ plus medallists, with 11 people trained as event stewards, 2 world records broken and the region's first ever Parkour Jam." (Legacy Trust, 2012b).

### Websites

<http://www.legacytrustuk.org/programmes/north-east/>

<http://www.ne-generation.org.uk/>

<http://www.theurbangames.org.uk/>

## Box4: North West – We Play

We Play was focused on digital innovation, excellence in outdoor arts and culture and sport participation. It was "... designed to elaborate on the way we think, to stimulate new experience and to provide opportunities for everyone to be a great 'player' through creative, physical, social and intellectual activity... Its series of annual programmes, collaborative projects and new commissions seek to leave a legacy of partnerships across different sectors, of a new cultural infrastructure in the North West and of artworks and events which have a life beyond 2012" (Legacy Trust, 2012c: n.p.). The annual programmes were:

- ◆ **Abandon Normal Devices** – A festival of new cinema, digital culture and art. It was intended to provoke "reaction, creation and experimentation between and across different disciplines and geographical locations" (Legacy Trust, 2012c: n.p.).
- ◆ **Blaze** – A youth-led programme which made links between culture and sport. In 2012, it produced Blaze Festival North West, a festival of culture, sport, music and art.
- ◆ **Lakes Alive** – A festival of outdoor performance and street arts across Cumbria. This festival was "commissioned by the London 2012 Festival to produce a new large-scale show by the French street arts company Les Commandos Percu for the first night of its opening weekend" (Legacy Trust, 2012c: n.p.).



**Figure 4:** Blaze Boom Bike Band. Reproduced courtesy of Brian Slater Photography

### Websites

[www.legacytrustuk.org/programmes/north-west/](http://www.legacytrustuk.org/programmes/north-west/)

[www.blazeonline.org.uk](http://www.blazeonline.org.uk)

[www.lakesalive.org](http://www.lakesalive.org)

### Box 5: South East – Accentuate

Accentuate was a four year programme of 15 projects which provided opportunities to develop and showcase the talents of deaf and disabled people. It aimed to change peoples' attitudes and perceptions of disabled people and to provide training and employment. The 15 projects were focused on training, developing networks and commissioning work and are outlined below:

- ◆ **Realise!** – Aimed to support & develop the entrepreneurial skills of young disabled people through skills-based workshops, competitions and work-placements;
- ◆ **Campaign!** – Created collaboration between disabled young people in the South East and competitor countries, to build campaigns to raise awareness on issues that affect them in their respective countries;
- ◆ **Collaborations!** – Created collaboration between disabled artists and disabled athletes;
- ◆ **Gaming!** – Young disabled people worked with industry gaming experts to design new, inclusive, interactive games based on the theme of the Paralympics and Stoke Mandeville;
- ◆ **Playground to Podium** – Provided disabled young people with opportunities to participate and excel in sport through coaching;
- ◆ **U Screen** – Provided opportunities collaboration between young disabled and deaf people and non-disabled young people to share stories and ideas through Screen Media;
- ◆ **Destination Zones** – Audits were undertaken and training developed to improve provisions for disabled people within key destinations;
- ◆ **Creative Landscapes** – Commissioned disabled artists to explore the historic environment for Heritage Open Days;
- ◆ **Sync South East** – Provided training and professional development for artists and organisations to support disabled leadership;
- ◆ **Fest** – Intended to raise the profile and develop networks of regional deaf and disabled artists;



**Figure 5:** StopGAP Dance Company, reproduced with permission of Chris Parkes (Christophotographic).

- ◆ **Go Public** – Developed opportunities for disabled and deaf artists in the public realm to complement 2012;
- ◆ **Major Events** – Aimed to attract world renowned disability sporting events to the South East;
- ◆ **Paralympic Region** – Improved access to Stoke Mandeville's historic archive and histories of individual Paralympic athletes;
- ◆ **Celebrate** – Aimed to ensure that the message of the Cultural Olympiad reached the public and influenced change in cultural provision in the future;
- ◆ **Commission** – Developed and commissioned work, networks and professional development opportunities which ensure equity of access. (Legacy Trust, 2012d)

#### Websites

<http://www.legacytrustuk.org/programmes/south-east/>

<http://www.accentuate-se.org/homepage>

## Conclusion

The Cultural Olympiad has been defined broadly and its programmes draw from three conceptualisations of culture. It is perceived as a complementary element to the sporting programme, widening relevance, increasing ownership and supporting wider regeneration aspirations relating to the development and staging of the Games. The Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 Games has had a relatively low profile in comparison with its sporting aspects. Media interest has been more focused on the sporting event and the physical developments associated with the Games, and the sporting events in the summer of 2012. This uneven relationship has been identified in previous sporting mega-events, such as the 2004 Sydney Olympics (Garcia, 2004). Varied explanations have been put forward for the relatively low profile of culture in sporting events. These include the difficulties in integrating sport and culture on the basis that they lack shared values and institutional structures (Inglis, 2008); diverse interpretations of culture and tensions arising between those interpretations; lack of agreed approaches or 'success criteria' to enable evaluation of the programme; and meagre funding for cultural activities in comparison to sporting elements of the games. There is an on-going discussion about the relationship between culture and sporting mega-events and further reading on these debates can be found in the recommended reading list below.

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## Ancillary Student Material

### Further Reading

Khan. 2004. Just another ceremony? A sustainable cultural legacy. In Vigor A, Mean M, Tim C. (eds) *After the Gold Rush: A Sustainable Olympic Bid for London*, Institute of Public Policy Research, Demos, London; 109-129.

Kennel J, MacLeod N, 2009. A grey literature review of the Cultural Olympiad. *Cultural Trends* 18 (1): 83-88.

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### Self-test questions

Try to answer the following questions in order to test your knowledge and understanding of the case. If you are not sure of the answers please re-read the case and refer to the references and further reading sources.

- 1 Explain why cultural programmes are often developed in connection with sporting mega-events.
- 2 Identify and account for the changes in the Cultural Olympiad for the 2012 Games since the original bid was made in 2004.
- 3 Identify the objectives of the Cultural Olympiad and discuss how these are met by the regional programmes.

### Themes

The key themes raised in this case study relate to the following:

#### Culture and sporting mega-events:

- ◆ Cultural events – conceptualisation, context and objectives
- ◆ Relationship between sporting mega-events and cultural programmes
- ◆ The Cultural Olympiad – evolution, objectives, structures, programmes

#### Conceptualisations of culture:

- ◆ Social
- ◆ Arts
- ◆ Economy/regeneration

#### Legacy

- ◆ Defining legacy
- ◆ Legacy planning, monitoring and evaluation

If you need to source further information on any of the above themes and theories, then these headings could be used as key words to search for materials and case studies.